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AUTHOR Thomas, Gail E.
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ABSTRACT

In this study the effects of factors of ascription, achievement, and educational expectations on the type of college attended by blacks and whites who participated in the 1972 National Longitudinal Survey are examined. Findings indicate that the variables used in past models of educational attainment were also important in determining the type of college that students attended. However, contrary to observations from most past models of schooling, socioeconomic status (SES) and standardized test performance exerted a more equivalent effect among black and white college students. Racial differences in the predictability of this research model were lower than differences observed in most past models of educational attainment. The past finding of a higher enrollment of blacks than whites in two-year colleges held only to a limited extent when analyzing blacks and whites in the aggregate. (This finding was completely reversed when controlling for SES and standardized test performance.) Seven tables support the findings of the study and a lengthy bibliography lists other pertinent sources of information on the subject. (Author/WI)

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THE INFLUENCE OF ASCRIPTION, ACHIEVEMENT, AND EDUCATIONAL EXPECTATIONS ON THE POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT OF BLACKS AND WHITES

Grant No. NIE-G-78-0210

Gail E. Thomas

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Introductory Statement

The Center for Social Organization of Schools has two primary objectives: to develop a scientific knowledge of how schools affect their students, and to use this knowledge to develop better school practices and organization.

The Center works through four programs to achieve its objectives. The Policy Studies in School Desegregation program applies the basic theories of social organization of schools to study the internal conditions of desegregated schools, the feasibility of alternative desegregation policies, and the interrelation of school desegregation with other equity issues such as housing and job desegregation. The School Organization program is currently concerned with authority-control structures, task structures, reward systems, and peer group processes in schools. It has produced a large-scale study of the effects of open schools, has developed Student Team Learning Instructional processes for teaching various subjects in elementary and secondary schools, and has produced a computerized system for school-wide attendance monitoring. The School Process and Career Development program is studying transitions from high school to post secondary institutions and the role of schooling in the development of career plans and the actualization of labor market outcomes. The Studies in Delinquency and School Environments program is examining the interaction of school environments, school experiences, and individual characteristics in relation to in-school and later-life delinquency.

This report, prepared by the School Process and Career Development program, examines differences in black and white enrollment in two- and four-year colleges, and examines factors that affect the type of college that these students attend.

The Influence of Ascription, Achievement and Educational Expectations on the Postsecondary Enrollment of Blacks and Whites

Abstract

This study examined the effects of factors of ascription, achievement and educational expectations on the type of college attended by blacks and whites who participated in a 1972 National Longitudinal Survey. Findings indicated that variables used in past models of educational attainment were also important in determining the type of college that students attended. However, contrary to observations from most past models of schooling, SES and standardized test performance exerted a more equivalent effect among black and white college goers. Also, racial differences in the predictability of this research model were lower than differences observed in most past models of educational attainment.

The past finding of a higher enrollment of blacks than whites in two-year colleges held only to a limited extent when analyzing blacks and whites in the aggregate. In addition, this finding was completely reversed when controlling for SES and standardized test performance.

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A significant increase has been observed in the proportion of persons furthering their education beyond high school. Jencks, Smith, Acland, Bane, Cohen, Gintis, Heyns and Michelson (1972) noted that in the decade of the 20's, approximately 40 percent of the U.S. population completed high school while just under 20 percent entered college. However, in the present decade (1970), 80 percent completed high school and approximately 40 percent entered college.

The increase in the proportion of Americans attending college has resulted in a more heterogeneous student population across college campuses. Traditionally, middle and upper class whites comprised the vast proportion of college enrollees. However, today, a larger variety of non-traditional groups are attending college. These groups include racial minorities and students from low family status and low academic achievement backgrounds. Several studies indicate, however, that while these students have gained access to postsecondary institutions, a large proportion of them, particularly blacks, are still concentrated in two-year institutions and non-selective four-year colleges (Astin, 1975, 1977; Brown and Stent, 1977; Gurin and Epps, 1975; Bayer, 1972; Khawas and Bisconti, 1974; Golladay, 1977).

This study will examine whether blacks, relative to whites, are disproportionately enrolled in two-year colleges vs. four-year colleges. More importantly, the study will evaluate, within a path modeling framework, black-white differences in factors that affect the type of colleges that students attend.[1]

The focus on "type of college attended" contrasts with past studies which have employed a similar methodology to investigate

black-white differences in educational attainment. Previous studies have limited their definition of educational attainment to the number of years of schooling completed by students at various points in the educational career. For example, in Porter's (1974) study of black-white differences in schooling among males, educational attainment was operationalized as the "highest level of schooling achieved five years after high school graduation." Portes and Wilson (1976) and Kerckhoff and Campbell (1977) also studied black and white males. Portes and Wilson (1976) employed a measure which ranged from "high school dropout to college entry" and the Kerckhoff and Campbell measure ranged from "ninth grade to two years of college." More recently, Thomas, Alexander and Eckland's (1977) and Thomas's (1977a) investigation of race and sex differences in educational attainment entailed an outcome variable which measured the transition of students from high school to college.

Again, the commonality of these studies is their focus on the number of years of schooling obtained as the critical outcome or dependent measure. However, apart from the issue of educational quantity or number of years of education obtained, educational administrators and policy makers are concerned with the quality of education that students receive. Astin (1977), for example, has described higher educational quality in terms of the types of educational institutions that students attend (i.e., public vs. private institutions; two-year vs. four-year institutions) and the prestige and selectivity of such institutions. Astin (1977) and others (Institute for the Study of Educational Policy, 1976) have

also argued that the type and quality of educational institutions that students attend is just as consequential in influencing student career outcomes as their decision to pursue and complete certain levels of schooling.

In studying secondary schooling effects, Crain (1971) found that blacks who had attended integrated high schools had greater job access than blacks who had attended racially segregated schools. In addition, Howard University researchers (Institute for the Study of Educational Policy, 1976) observed that blacks who were enrolled in four-year colleges were more successful in completing their college training than blacks who were enrolled in two-year colleges. Finally, Astin (1977) noted that students who were enrolled in more "select" colleges and universities had greater access to subsequent educational and career opportunities than students who were enrolled in less "select" institutions.

The major dependent variable in this analysis--postsecondary enrollment--considers the types of institutions that students attend (i.e., four-year colleges vs. two-year, vocational, junior colleges). The influence of family background, standardized test performance, high school performance and educational expectations on postsecondary enrollment will be examined. Previous studies have evaluated the effects of these variables on college enrollment and subsequent educational attainment (Portes and Wilson, 1976; Thomas et al., 1977). This study addresses the extent to which these variables also affect the type of college that blacks and whites attend.

Data

This analysis is based on 7,249 black and white males and females who enrolled in postsecondary institutions after high school graduation (846 blacks, 6,403 whites). These students were a subsample of approximately 21,600 students who participated in the Base Year (1972) and First Year Follow-Up (1973) study of the National Longitudinal Study (NLS) of the High School Senior Class of 1972. The survey was sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics and conducted by the Educational Testing Service and the Research Triangle Institute. The purpose of the survey was to determine what happened to students after they left high school as indicated by their subsequent educational plans and aspirations and educational and vocational experiences.

The project employed a two-stage probability sample with schools as first-stage sampling units and students as second-stage units. A representative sample of twelfth grade males and females who were enrolled in some 1,200 public, private and church-affiliated secondary schools within the fifty states of the United States and the District of Columbia took part in the survey.

Within each participating school, a random sample of eighteen twelfth graders was drawn from senior class rosters. Participating students completed an approximately eighty-minute questionnaire which dealt with their post-high school plans, educational and occupational aspirations, family background, and previous educational experiences. These students were also administered a sixty-nine minute standardized achievement test constructed by Educational

Testing Services which measured verbal and nonverbal skills. Additional data were obtained from student school records and from questionnaires completed by guidance counselors. Finally, a one-year follow-up survey was conducted between October 1973 and April 1974 by the Research Triangle Institute, with the assistance of the U.S. Census Bureau. Of the seniors who had participated in the Base-Year Survey, 94 percent completed the first follow-up questionnaire--65 percent by mail and 29 percent by personal interview.

The original sample of 21,600 respondents was reduced to a subsample of 7,249 as a result of four restrictions. First, only black and white respondents were considered in the analysis. Therefore, approximately 1,600 respondents who were of Mexican, Asian and Oriental descent were excluded from the study. Second, the analysis considers only those students who enrolled in post-secondary institutions after high school graduation. Therefore, some 6,760 students who did not immediately pursue postsecondary training were excluded. Third, approximately 5,300 students who did not have data on the standardized achievement test measure which was administered late in the school year during the Base-Year Survey (1972) were excluded from the analysis. No subsequent attempt was made to administer the test to these non-respondents. Fourth, respondents who had missing data on all variables were excluded from the analysis. Based on these restrictions, the findings from this study are applicable to the resulting subsample.

Variables

The effects of six independent variables on postsecondary enrollment will be examined in the analysis. This section describes these variables and the major dependent variable.

Family Background Status (SES):

While the influence of family status is less influential today than two decades ago in affecting students' chances of obtaining a college education (Clark, 1972), some researchers have noted a continuous independent effect of family status throughout the entire schooling career (Eckland, 1969; Sewell and Shah, 1967; Tulkin, 1968). Thus middle and upper class students are likely to obtain more schooling and educational credentials than lower class students (Jencks, et al., 1972). Based on their Wisconsin sample of whites, Sewell and Shah (1967) reported that upper class students were nearly six times more likely to enter and complete college than lower class students, even after achievement test performance was taken into consideration. Similarly, Jencks et al. (1972) noted that 87 percent of all high school graduates whose families earned $15,000 annually or more entered college in 1967 as compared to only 20 percent of those students whose parents earned less than $3,000 annually.

The family background composite used in this study is based on information provided by respondents on four status measures: father's education, mother's education, father's occupation and a household index item. Heise's (1972) sheaf analytic approach will be used to construct a composite index which summarizes the combined influence of these four status measures.[2]

Race

The ascriptive status of race also exerts an important role in the process of schooling. For example, several researchers have found variables in the schooling process to operate differently for blacks than whites. In addition, these researchers observed schooling models to be less powerful in explaining the process of educational attainment for blacks than whites (Porter, 1974; Portes and Wilson, 1976; Kerckhoff and Campbell, 1977).

Portes and Wilson (1976) and Thomas et al. (1977) found a small but significant direct effect of race on college entry net of SES and standardized test performance. The direct effect of race was negative for whites, which implied that a higher proportion of blacks than whites of similar SES and test performance entered college. A more detailed investigation of this finding by Thomas (1977b) indicated that the higher college attendance rates for blacks than whites primarily existed among students who had low attributes on either one or both of these background variables.

More recently, Brown and Stent (1977) and Howard University researchers (1976) noted that despite gains in initial college enrollment, blacks were less likely than whites to complete their college training. In addition, Astin (1977) found blacks and lower status students to be more highly concentrated in less select four-year colleges and universities relative to whites.

The influence of race on the type of college that students attend will be examined in this study. Race is treated as a dichotomous dummy variable with blacks coded 0 and whites coded 1.

Standardized Achievement Tests

Performance on standardized achievement tests is as important in affecting higher educational access as students' personal attributes (Sewell and Shah, 1967; Havighurst and Neugarten, 1967). While some studies show that a sizeable proportion of students who score high on achievement tests do not enter college (Havighurst and Neugarten, 1967; Peng, Bailey and Eckland, 1977), most studies show that students with high test scores are more likely to further their education than students with low test scores (Coleman, 1969; Sewell, Haller and Portes, 1969; Sewell, Haller and Ohlendorf, 1970). In addition, blacks and students from low family status background perform less successfully on standardized tests than whites and middle class students (Jencks, et al., 1972; Montagu, 1975).

In this study standardized achievement was addressed by four ability subtests that tapped students' verbal and non-verbal skills. The achievement test employed is similar to the college admissions test used by the Educational Testing Service and the American College Testing Program. It consisted of an equally weighted linear composite of the four subtests: math, vocabulary, letter groups and reading.

School Performance Measures

A. High School Senior Rank

In addition to standardized achievement test scores, the position of students' academic average relative to other students in their class is a widely used criterion for college admissions.

Both class rank and grades have been found to be positively correlated with college enrollment (American College Testing Program, 1973; Cole, 1969; Maxey, 1972). Previous studies have shown that lower class and black students receive lower grades and class rank status than their middle class and white counterparts (Havighurst and Neugarten, 1967; Crain, 1971; Porter, 1974). But more recent studies have shown that when family status and mental ability are controlled, blacks obtain higher class rank status than whites (Portes and Wilson, 1976; Thomas et al., 1977).

Data on class rank were obtained from students' high school records and are coded in deciles.

B. High School Track Placement

Being in an academic or college preparatory program is also positively related to college entry (Bachman, 1970; Bachman, Swayzer and Ilona, 1971; Rosenbaum, 1976; Alexander and Eckland, 1974). In noting the effects of track placement on college entry, Bachman (1970) observed that approximately 60 percent of the ninth grade Project Talent students who were in college preparatory programs in 1960 entered college in 1964 as compared to 18 percent of those students in vocational and general programs. College preparatory students also had higher grades, achievement test scores and family background than students in non-academic programs (Bachman, 1970).

The measure of academic track placement presently employed was an original seven-category item obtained from school records. This variable was recoded as a dichotomous dummy variable defined as

enrollment in an academic curriculum versus vocational, general and other non-academic programs.

Educational Expectations

Sewell and Shah (1967) found that the most critical factor in obtaining higher education involves the decision or plans to enter higher education. Other researchers have observed a positive relationship between college plans and family status, standardized test performance and college attendance (Sewell, Haller and Portes, 1969; Sewell, Haller and Ohlendorf, 1970; Alexander and Eckland, 1974).

The educational plans measure used in this study is obtained from two items. On the major item, respondents indicated the highest level of education they planned to obtain. Response categories ranged from "less than high school graduation" to "graduate or professional school." However, to increase the amount of usable information on this item, a second item asked respondents what they would most likely be doing in the year after they left high school.[3]

Postsecondary Enrollment

The major dependent variable for this study--postsecondary enrollment--is a dichotomous dummy variable which is defined as entrance in either: (a) a four-year college or (b) a vocational college, two-year college, junior college or other type of postsecondary institutions. Respondents who were enrolled in a four-year college after high school graduation in October of 1972 or October of 1973 are coded 1. Respondents who were enrolled in other types of postsecondary institutions during either of these time periods are coded 0.[4]

Findings

Univariate and Multivariate Distributions by Race

Table 1 presents the univariate distributions of all variables in the analysis by race. It is important to keep in mind that the results here and throughout the analyses pertain to the subsample of NLS college-goers.

Table 1 About Here

To begin with, these data confirm previous observations regarding the large concentration of blacks relative to whites in the low family status and low test performance categories. Fifty-six percent of the blacks are of low family status vs. 13 percent of the whites; and 55 percent of the blacks scored low on the standardized test measure vs. 9 percent of the whites.

Next, in terms of the school performance measures, a higher percentage of whites (40%) are located in the top rank of their classes than blacks (27%). But a larger proportion of blacks (55%) than whites (36%) are enrolled in academic tracks.

Although the higher class rank status of whites than blacks is consistent with past findings (Gordon, 1969; Crain, 1971), the higher enrollment of blacks than whites in the academic track cannot be readily accounted for. A probable explanation is that, because black and white students are still largely attending segregated high schools (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1977), NLS respondents may be also primarily enrolled in desegregated schools where tracking criteria and practices may differ between schools of varying racial composition.

Although NLS blacks and whites differ on the school performance measures, they are similar with respect to their educational expectations. Approximately 48 percent of the blacks expect to obtain a four-year college education vs. 53 percent of the whites; and 13 percent of the blacks expect to pursue graduate and professional training vs. 16 percent of the whites. These percentages imply equity between blacks and whites in terms of their educational expectations. However, recent studies suggest that racial disparities exist in the extent to which blacks actually complete their college training and have access to graduate and professional education relative to whites (Institute for the Study of Educational Policy, 1976; Brown and Stent, 1977; Thomas, 1978).

Lastly, Table 1 supports only slightly the previous observation concerning the higher concentration of blacks than whites in vocational and two-year colleges (Astin, 1977; Institute for the Study of Educational Policy, 1976). Approximately 47 percent of the blacks are in two-year and vocational colleges vs. 44 percent of the whites.

Because family status and standardized test performance are important variables affecting postsecondary enrollment (Eckland, 1969; Schoenfeldt, 1966, 1968), the distribution of blacks and whites by type of institution is re-examined with these background variables controlled. These results are shown in Table 2. Within every family status and test performance category, a higher percentage of whites are in vocational and junior colleges than blacks. Thus a higher proportion of NLS blacks than whites actually attend four-year

colleges net of family status and test performance.

The tau and Z values further indicate that racial disparities favoring blacks are greatest among high-status, low-performing students and low-status, high-performing students.[5] Approximately 48 percent of high-status, low-test-performing blacks enter four-year college vs. 43 percent of the whites of similar statuses. Percentage differences between the races in four-year college attendance is lowest among students of high family and high test score statuses: 78 percent of the blacks in this category enter four-year college vs. 62 percent of the whites.

The data in Tabie 2 clearly conflict with past observations regarding the higher enrollment of blacks than whites in two-year and junior colleges. No clear explanation can be presently offered; however, two possibilities exist. First, programs designed to achieve quality of higher educational opportunity have probably focused greater attention on access to four-year colleges and universities than two-year and junior colleges. Thus, to the extent that these efforts have been effective in enhancing four-year college access, blacks with low family status and/or low achievement test scores appear to be more successful in capitalizing on such efforts than are comparable whites--at least up to the point of college entry.

Second, and perhaps more probable, black-white differences in postsecondary enrollment may be more closely associated with the quality and specific characteristics of the colleges that students attend. Therefore blacks within present SES and test score categories

may not be really advantaged to whites in terms of four-year college entry if, in fact, they are attending colleges and universities of lower quality than whites.

Both explanations may be strong possibilities and warrant extensive investigation by more appropriate data. Nonetheless, these data indicate clearly that NLS blacks, relative to whites, are not overly concentrated in non-four-year postsecondary institutions.

Path Models of Schooling for Racial Groups

In the second part of the analysis, the postsecondary enrollment process for blacks and whites is examined within a path modeling framework. Here the concern is with assessing racial differences in the magnitude of variable effects in the model. Figure 1 displays the causal relationship among variables in the research model.

Figure 1 About Here

These variable specifications are similar to past models of schooling which have been guided by the Wisconsin researchers' (Sewell, Haller and Portes, 1969; Sewell, Haller and Ohlendorf, 1970) extension of the original Blau and Duncan (1967) model.

Family status and standardized test performance are the two major independent variables in the model. Both variables directly affect students' school performance as measured by class rank and academic track placement (Alexander and Eckland, 1974; Hauser, Sewell and Alwin, 1974; Thomas et al., 1977). In addition, these background variables, along with the school performance measures,

directly affect students' educational expectations (Portes and Wilson, 1976). Finally, all preceding variables in the model affect post-secondary enrollment.

Before considering the results in Tables 3 and 4, it should be noted that a preliminary test (not presented) for the significance of race main and interaction effects was performed. The test yielded both significant main and interaction effects. However, the presence of interactions (which implies that a single regression line does not adequately fit the data for blacks and whites) should assume precedence over main effects (Kerlinger, 1973) which suggest that an additive rather than a multiplicative model best fits the data. Therefore in this analysis, only race interactions will be examined.[6] The results from separate analysis of the research model for blacks and whites are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

Tables 3 and 4 About Here

Table 3 gives the standardized or path coefficients for blacks and whites and Table 4 gives the corresponding unstandardized coefficients which are more appropriate for between group comparisons (Blalock, 1967). The standardized values have been often used as a basis of group comparisons because of their greater familiarity. However, because the unstandardized values are more appropriate for such comparisons, they will be given greater priority in interpreting results when possible.[7]

Beginning with the impact of family status, a comparison of the sheaf values shows that for blacks and whites, its impacts on

standardized test performance (.232 vs. .256), being in an academic track (.135 vs. .140) and attending a four-year college (.087 vs. .075) are approximately equal. But family status clearly has a stronger impact on the class rank status of blacks (.198) than whites (.057).

In terms of the latter finding, teachers' evaluations of black and white students may be relevant. For example, Porter (1974) made a similar observation; he speculated that teachers' grading and ranking of students is not based only on scholastic performance, but also on their evaluation of students' personal attributes (i.e., family background, conformity and behavioral conduct). Porter's (1974) hypothesis may apply to these data.

Family background also has a stronger impact on the educational expectations of whites (.170) than blacks (.131). Porter (1974) and Kerckhoff and Campbell (1977) made similar observations from their study of black and white males. The stronger effect of family status on expectations for whites than blacks may be related to three factors. First, the middle and upper class status of most white respondents may represent a realistic and efficacious match with their expectations; however, the predominantly low status of blacks may not be as influential in affecting their educational expectations.

Second, the educational expectations of blacks may be more related to subjective criteria (e.g., their own personal aspirations and motivations and the influence of significant others) than to an objective criterion such as family status. For example, Thomas

(1977a) observed that the influence of significant others and perceived college ability exerted a stronger impact on the educational expectations of blacks than family status. Third, Bielby, Hauser and Featherman (1977) have noted that part of the lower effect of SES operating in the attainment process for blacks is attributed to response bias in retrospective reporting of family background information.

Considering the effects of standardized test performance, the unstandardized and standardized values suggest that test performance has almost an equal impact for blacks and whites both on enrollment in an academic track and a four-year college. But in a previous examination of the effects of standardized test performance on college attendance vs. nonattendance, Thomas (1977a) found its effects slightly stronger for blacks than whites.

Although the impact of test performance on track placement and four-year college entry is about equivalent for the races, the standardized and unstandardized values show that its effect on class rank is stronger for whites (.529 and .066) than blacks (.386 and .047). The stronger impact of test performance on white than black class rank status may be partly attributed to the fact that such tests have been found to be standardized on middle class whites (Montagu, 1975). Thus, one might expect these tests to better account for white than black class rank status (e.g. as determined by grade performance).

Turning to the school performance measures, Tables 3 and 4 show that class rank has a more equal impact on the educational expectations

of blacks and whites than does track placement, which exerts a stronger effect on white expectations (.248 and .406) than black expectations (.175 and .315). Next, the effects of the school performance measures on postsecondary enrollment show that the relationship between class rank and four-year college entry is stronger for whites than blacks, but the reverse is true regarding the relationship between track placement and four-year college entry.

The stronger relationship between class rank and postsecondary enrollment for whites than blacks contrasts with Kerckhoff and Campbell's (1977) observation of a stronger effect of high school grades on the educational attainment of blacks than whites, but is consistent with Porter's (1974) and Portes and Wilson's (1976) finding which similarly indicated a stronger impact of white grades than black grades on educational attainment. The latter researchers noted that it is often the case in the college admissions process that admissions officers assign lower value to grades earned by blacks (particularly those earned in predominantly black institutions) than to grades earned by whites. This may partly explain the present finding.

The reason for the stronger impact of track placement on postsecondary enrollment for blacks than whites is less clear. However, it too may be related to the racial context of the high schools that students attend and to the processes of academic differentiation and assignment of students within particular schools. For example, if NLS blacks and whites largely attended segregated high schools, black and white teachers may have employed distinct criteria

for determining their track placement based upon differences in student academic backgrounds and in policies and norms governing the schools. In addition, racial differences in the effect of track placement on postsecondary enrollment could be attributed to differences in the types and quality of postsecondary schools that NLS blacks and whites attended.

Next, educational expectations, the final variable in the research model, is shown as the single most important predictor of four-year college attendance for blacks and whites. But the unstandardized values show that its effect is slightly stronger for whites (.245) than for blacks (.210). Thomas (1977b) also observed educational expectations to be the major determinant of college attendance vs. non-attendance among NLS respondents. Also, Portes and Wilson (1976) found their measure of educational aspirations to be the prime determinant of college entry for black and white males.

Lastly, a comparison of blacks and whites regarding the percent of variance explained in the dependent variables can be made. The proportion of variance explained in class rank and educational expectations is higher for whites than blacks, but the R^2s for remaining dependent variables are nearly equal between the races. This is particularly true of the major outcome variable--four-year college entry--where approximately 35 percent of the variance is explained for whites and blacks.

The similarity here in the proportion of variance explained in the type of college attended for blacks and whites contrasts with previous studies of racial comparisons involving college attendance

and subsequent educational attainment (Thomas et al., 1977; Thomas, 1977a; Porter, 1974; Portes and Wilson, 1976; Kerckhoff and Campbell, 1977). In the Thomas et al. investigation of the impact of structural background and school process variables on college entry, 34 percent of the variance was explained in white college attendance vs. 24 percent for blacks.

In Thomas's (1977) follow-up study which extended the Thomas et al. (1977) model to include interpersonal factors (i.e., significant others influences, perceived college ability, educational expectations), 46 percent of the variance was explained in white college entry vs. 34 percent for blacks. Similarly, in Portes and Wilson's (1976) model, 43 percent of the variance was explained in white college entry vs. 31 percent for blacks.

Finally, 38 percent of the variance for whites vs. 34 percent for blacks was explained in Porter's (1974) measure of educational attainment; and in Kerckhoff and Campbell's (1977) study, 59 percent of the variance in educational attainment was explained for whites vs. 61 percent for blacks. Thus, with the exception of the Kerckhoff and Campbell study, past schooling models have accounted for a greater percentage of variance in educational attainment for whites than blacks, whereas the present model suggests overall similarity between the races in the model's predictability.

Thus, race effects in the schooling process appear more important in differentiating between: (1) students who do and do not gain access to college; and (2) students who do and do not

complete their college training and pursue subsequent higher education (i.e., schooling completed five years after high school graduation as indicated by Porter's measure). But among NLS respondents who have gained access to college, the influence of race appears less consequential--at least in terms of the explanatory power of the schooling process for blacks and whites.

Also, the greater race effect observed in most past studies as compared to the present study may be a function of differences in the impact of sorting and selective processes associated with various points in the educational career. For example, the transition of students from high school to college and the extent to which students persist at various levels during their college training obviously entail important dynamic processes of selection. However, relative to these transitional stages, the point of college entry which represents an initial accomplishment in the educational career may reflect a less dynamic and selective process. Thus students who have been successful in gaining college access may be more homogeneous as a group. But these students may certainly become more differentiated in the process of their college career given that some will be successful in completing their training while others will not be successful.

Summary and Conclusions

This study examined the influence of the high school attainment process on the enrollment of blacks and whites in two-year and junior colleges vs. four-year colleges. An analysis of "type of college attended" as a major dependent variable provides an important

basis of comparison with similar past investigations which have focused on the amount or level of schooling as a major outcome variable. However, the independent variables employed in this study are similar to those employed in past studies.

One important observation derived from this investigation is that the exogeneous variables examined are of major importance, and in many respects are of similar consequences in affecting both educational attainment (or the amount of schooling obtained) and the type of postsecondary institution that students enter. For example, educational expectations is a prime determinant of educational attainment (Portes and Wilson, 1976; Thomas, 1977b) and the type of postsecondary institutions entered as indicated in this study. Also, three of the major race interactions observed in this study are also noted in a previous study (Thomas, 1977b). These interactions include the stronger relationship between standardized test performance, class rank, SES, and educational expectations for whites than blacks, and the stronger relationship between SES and class rank for blacks than whites.

Two other observations in this study contrast with past findings. They concern racial differences in educational attainment. First, the impacts of SES and standardized test performance in the present research model are fairly similar for blacks and whites who had obtained college access. However, previous studies have noted the effects of these variables to be stronger in the educational attainment process for whites than blacks (Portes and Wilson, 1975, 1976; Kerckhoff and Campbell, 1977; Porter, 1974).

Second, and perhaps more important, racial differences in the predictability of the present model--especially involving the major outcome variable--are lower between blacks and whites than observed in most models that have evaluated levels of schooling attained (Portes and Wilson, 1976; Thomas et al., 1977; Thomas, 1977b; Kerckhoff and Campbell, 1977).

Based upon these findings, it is concluded that race interactions affecting SES and standardized test performance and other variables in the schooling process are more pronounced at the point of transition of students from high school to college and at stages subsequent to college entry than at the point at which students had actually gained access to some type of college. Stated more succinctly, race effects appear far less associated with the type of college that students enter than with actual college entry vs. non-entry and subsequent educational attainment.

A final important observation derived from the preliminary analysis is that the previous observation of a higher enrollment of blacks than whites in two-year colleges (Astin, 1977) only applies in a limited way when NLS blacks and whites are investigated in the aggregate. But more striking is the fact that this finding is completely reversed when controlling for family status (SES) and standardized test performance. Thus, net of SES and family status, a greater proportion of NLS whites than blacks entered two-year colleges between the Fall of 1972 and 1973. This is especially the case among high family status-low test performing students and low family status-high test performing students.

In terms of this finding, it is suggested that NLS blacks may be highly concentrated in predominantly black four-year colleges. In fact, Howard University researchers (1976) found that as recently as 1974, one-half of the BA degrees obtained by blacks were awarded by predominantly black institutions; thus this possibility seems highly probable. Second, it is suggested that knowledge concerning the quality of postsecondary institutions that students attend and the experiences marking their successes and failures in these institutions might better explain the current finding.

Data relevant to higher educational quality, and the persistence of students at various stages in the college and subsequent educational career, must be obtained to examine these latter possibilities. Also, other findings from this study imply the need for data on the high school and college racial composition of the student body and faculty. In addition, information concerning how high school grades, academic ranking and track placement are determined by school officials may also have provided valuable information to this study. Given the availability of data, these issues will be addressed in future analyses in an effort to increase the understanding of current findings and race effects in the schooling process.

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Footnotes

1. The influence of sex is not examined in this study. However, its effect was examined in previous studies involving simultaneous race and sex comparisons (Thomas, Alexander and Eckland, 1977; Thomas, 1977a). The results from these studies showed that sex was less influential than race in affecting post-secondary enrollment.
2. Heise's (1972) sheaf technique is a useful approach which summarizes the direct influence of such abstract constructs as family status on a given dependent variable when other variables are controlled. Some researchers (Hodge, 1970; Haug and Sussman, 1971) have argued for disaggregating the effects of multiple indices while others have chosen to examine the joint effects of such measures (Porter, 1974; Portes and Wilson, 1976). In an earlier analysis, the separate and joint effects of SES were examined for NLS blacks and whites. The results from separately analyzing the indices were similar for blacks and whites. In addition, no information appeared to have been lost by combining the separate components. Thus it was decided to present the composite measures in this study.
3. It is important to note that the present measure of educational plans may be biased due to timing if NLS seniors' statements of their plans during the senior year actually reflected knowledge of their chances of entering college in the following Fall. However, on a Base-Year (1972) item that asked respondents when they first decided to go to college, 42 percent indicated before

10th grade and an additional 20 percent indicated between 10th and 11th grade. Therefore, assuming that this information is to some extent reliable, the current measure of educational expectations may not be severely biased.

4. All measures employed in this study except the major dependent measure--postsecondary enrollment--were obtained from data provided during the Base-Year (1972) study. Data on post-secondary enrollment were obtained from the First-Year Follow-Up survey.

5. The Z values were derived from a test for the significance of difference between cell proportions (Ferguson, 1959). While the test does not obtain a correction factor for unequal N's, the results are considered fairly reliable, despite unequal cell proportions, provided that sample N's are not less than 100. The computational formula for the test is as follows:

$$Z = \frac{P_1 - P_2}{S_{P_1 - P_2}} = \frac{P_1 - P_2}{\sqrt{pq\left[\left(\frac{1}{N_1}\right) + \left(\frac{1}{N_2}\right)\right]}}$$

Where: Z = standard score (given adequate N)

P_1, P_2 = sample values of the proportions

$S_{P_1 - P_2}$ = standard error estimate

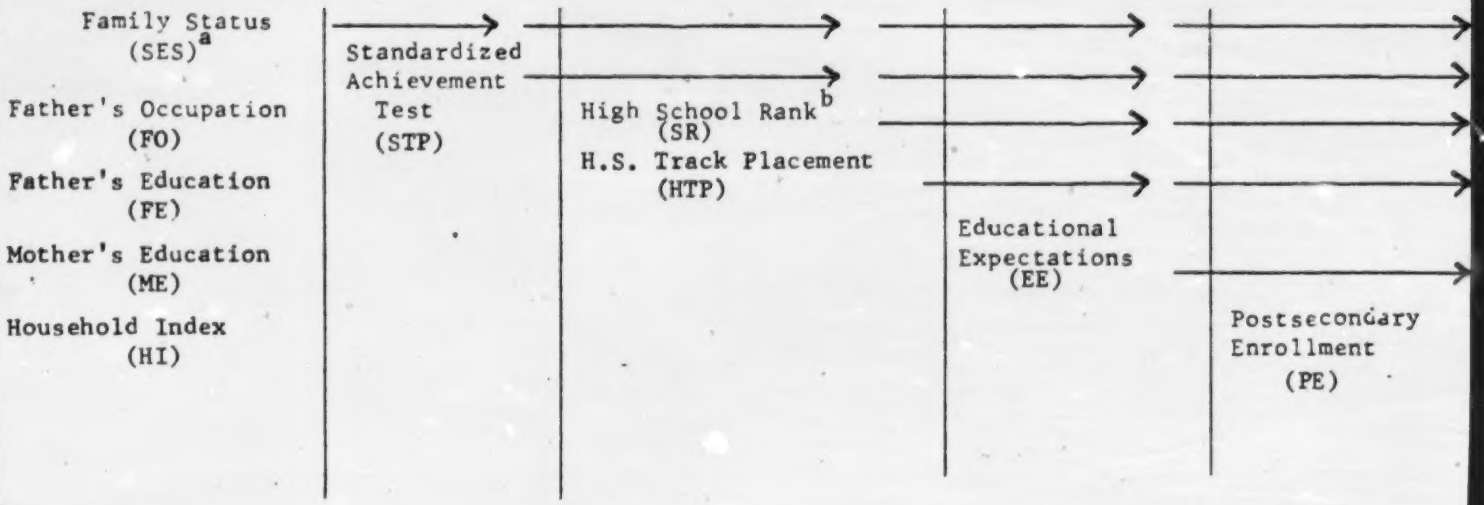
6. While an examination of interactions is appropriate here, most past studies have investigated both race main and interaction effects. Thus, the constant intercepts are presented in Table 4 to provide the reader some basis for evaluating past race main effects reported.

7. No consistent criteria exist for establishing what constitutes a major difference between racial groups. Therefore, a difference of $\pm$ .03 or greater between standardized values (which is consistent with unstandardized values) will be arbitrarily considered as a significant group difference. However, because the corresponding unstandardized values are generally lower than the standardized values a difference of $\pm$ .01 or greater between unstandardized values will also be accepted as part of the criteria for between group significance.

Figure 1

The Influence of Ascription, Achievement and

Educational Expectations on Postsecondary Enrollment



[a]The causal relationship between high school rank and curriculum is not examined.

Table 1

Percentage Distribution for Family Background, Standardized Test Performance, Class Rank, Track Placement Educational Expectations and Postsecondary Enrollment of NLS College-goers by Race

Family Background[a]	Black (0) (N=840)	White (1) (N=6,402)
(1) Low	56.4	13.4
(2) Medium	33.6	48.4
(3) High	10.0	38.2
	(100.0)	(100.0)
(Total N missing=7)		

Test Performance[b]	Black (0) (N=846)	White (1) (N=6,403)
(1) Low	55.2	9.8
(2) Medium	35.5	46.0
(3) High	6.3	44.2
	(100.0)	(100.0)
(Total N missing=0)		

Class Rank[c]	Black (0) (N=708)	White (1) (N=6,031)
(1) Low (4th Quartile)	18.9	9.7
(2) Medium (3rd & 2nd Quartile)	53.7	49.4
(3) High (1st Quartile)	27.4	40.9
	(100.0)	(100.0)
(Total N missing=510)		

Track Placement	Black (0) (N=846)	White (1) (N=6,403)
(1) Academic	55.1	36.2
(2) Vocational-General	44.9	63.8
	(100.0)	(100.0)
(Total N missing=0)		

Table 1 Continued

Educational Expectations	Black (0) (N=844)	White (1) (N=6,390)
(1) No College	16.2	6.9
(2) Vocational or Junior College	22.7	24.5
(3) College 4 Year	47.9	52.6
(4) Graduate and Professional	13.2	16.0
	(100.0)	(100.0)

(Total N missing=15)

Postsecondary Enrollment[d]	Black (0) (N=846)	White (1) (N=6,403)
(1) Vocational or Junior College	46.8	44.2
(2) 4 Year College	53.2	55.8
	(100.0)	(100.0)

(Total N missing=0)

[a]The family background measure used here was developed by the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) on the basis of an equally factor weighted linear combination of father's education, mother's education, father's occupation, parental income and a household index. The five variables were standardized and summed over non-missing components. The resulting scores were classified into a lower, middle two, and an upper quartile. The two middle quartiles are presently combined. The sheaf analytic construct will be employed in subsequent analyses.

[b]RTI's factor weighted linear construct based on four subtests--reading, letter groups, vocabulary and math--constitutes the present achievement test measure. The low performance category corresponds roughly to the lower quartile, the middle performance group to the two middle quartiles and the high performance group to the upper quartile. The interval test measure will be subsequently employed.

[c]The ordinal class rank measure is used here. The corresponding measure which is coded in deciles will be used in subsequent analyses.

[d]Approximately 47 percent of the NLS blacks and whites did not enter college in the Fall of 1973.

Table 2

Percentage Postsecondary Enrollment by

Race, Family Background and Standardized Test Performance

	Low Status[a] Low Performance		High Status Low Performance		Low Status High Performance		High Status High Performance	
	Black (1)	White (2)	Black (1)	White (2)	Black (1)	White (2)	Black (1)	White (2)
2 Yr/other College (1)	67.3 (N=204)	81.6 (N=129)	52.2 (N=83)	77.1 (N=361)	34.5 (N=59)	57.1 (N=398)	21.7 (N=45)	38.3 (N=1,943)
4 Yr. College	32.7 (N=99)	18.4 (N=29)	47.8 (N=76)	22.9 (N=107)	65.5 (N=112)	42.9 (N=299)	78.3 (N=162)	61.7 (N=3,136)
Total	100.0 (N=303)	100.0 (N=158)	100.0 (N=159)	100.0 (N=468)	100.0 (N=171)	100.0 (N=697)	100.0 (N=207)	100.0 (N=5,079)
Tau_b[b]	-.152		-.239		-.180		-.066	
Z[b]	4.88		6.07		5.38		3.32	

Note: Total N missing = 7

[a] Because of the small number of blacks in the high SES and high test performance categories, the high and middle level categories for both variables have been combined here.

[b] All taus and Z's are significant at the .01 level.

Table 3

Standardized Coefficients Representing Model of Postsecondary Enrollment for Whites (N=6,013)[a] and Blacks (N=648)[a]

Independent Variables		Dependent Variables				
		STP	SR	HTP	EE	PE
SES[b]	Whites	.256	.057	.140	.170	.090
	Blacks	.232	.198	.135	.131	.087
STP	Whites	.529*[c]	.348*	.219*	.075*	
	Blacks	.386*	.356*	.279*	.100*	
SR	Whites				.128*	.142*
	Blacks				.145*	.105*
HTP	Whites				.248*	.104*
	Blacks				.175*	.186*
EE	Whites					.389*
	Blacks					.373*
R^2s	Whites	.064	.271	.151	.281	.345
	Blacks	.064	.152	.162	.248	.354

[a]The original subsamples of 6,403 whites and 846 blacks were presently reduced to 6,013 and 648 respectively as a result of using the regression program's "listwise deletion" technique which eliminates from calculations cases with missing values on any variables.

[b]Values for the SES composite measure are sheaf coefficients which can be interpreted as standardized regression coefficients (Heise, 1972). The technique does not provide a corresponding unstandardized coefficient.

[c]Asterisks after coefficients indicate significance at the .01 level.

Table 4

Unstandardized Coefficients Representing Model of Postsecondary Enrollment for Whites (N=6,013) and Blacks (N=648)[a]

Independent Variables		Dependent Variables				
		STP	SR	HTP	EE	PE
SES[b]	Whites					
	Blacks					
STP	Whites		.066*[c]	.008*	.008*	.002*
	Blacks		.047*	.008*	.012*	.002*
SR	Whites				.040*	.028*
	Blacks				.050*	.020*
HTP	Whites				.406*	.108*
	Blacks				.315*	.184*
EE	Whites					.245*
	Blacks					.210*
Constant Intercepts						
	Whites	.140.462	-2.333	-0.113	-0.505	-1.077
	Blacks	.116.926	2.653	-0.334	-0.142	-0.692

[a]The original subsamples of 6,403 whites and 846 blacks were presently reduced to 6,013 and 648 respectively as a result of using the regression program's "listwise deletion" technique which eliminates from calculations cases with missing values on any variables.

[b]Values for the SES composite measure are sheaf coefficients which can be interpreted as standardized regression coefficients (Heise, 1972). The technique does not provide a corresponding unstandardized coefficient.

[c]Asterisks after coefficients indicate significance at the .01 level.

APPENDIX

Table I

Item Means and Standard Deviations for Variables in Model of Postsecondary Enrollment

Variables		Blacks (N=648)	Whites (N=6,013)
Father's Occupation (FO)	$\bar{x}$	31.18	48.12
	SD	21.27	23.05
Father's Education (FE)	$\bar{x}$	10.95	13.24
	SD	3.27	3.20
Mother's Education (ME)	$\bar{x}$	11.81	12.77
	SD	2.82	2.36
Household Index (HI)	$\bar{x}$	16.84	18.36
	SD	1.84	1.47
Standardized Achievement Test (SAT)	$\bar{x}$	138.16	165.01
	SD	21.29	20.47
Senior Rank (SR)	$\bar{x}$	5.97	6.84
	SD	2.60	2.54
H.S. Track Placement (HTP)	$\bar{x}$	1.47	1.64
	SD	0.50	0.48
Educational Expectations (EE)	$\bar{x}$	2.64	2.79
	SD	0.90	0.78
Postsecondary Enrollment (PE)	$\bar{x}$	0.57	0.56
	SD	0.49	0.49

Table II

Lower Diagonal Inter-Item Correlations Among Variables in Model of Postsecondary Enrollment for Whites (N=6,013)

	FO	FE	ME	HI	AT	SR	C	PP	PE
FO	--								
FE	.590	--							
ME	.355	.539	--						
HI	.277	.313	.256	--					
SAT	.175	.227	.208	.079	--				
SR	.052	.080	.076	-.010	.517	--			
HTP	.146	.172	.149	.095	.373	.284	--		
EE	.207	.256	.217	.132	.420	.325	.399	--	
PE	.186	.234	.191	.111	.373	.344	.346	.534	--

Note: Refer to Table 1 for names of variables abbreviated here.

Table III

Lower Diagonal Inter-Item Correlations Among Variables in Model of Postsecondary Enrollment for Blacks (N=648)

	FO	FE	ME	HI	AT	SR	C	PP	PE
FO	--								
FE	.513	--							
ME	.367	.568	--						
HI	.250	.313	.319	--					
SAT	.203	.190	.211	.099	--				
SR	-.045	-.012	-.003	-.102	.354	--			
HTP	.119	.145	.152	.173	.377	.228	--		
EE	.187	.177	.182	.089	.428	.279	.334	--	
PE	.109	.121	.189	.049	.382	.295	.379	.526	--

Note: Refer to Table 1 for names of variables abbreviated here.